

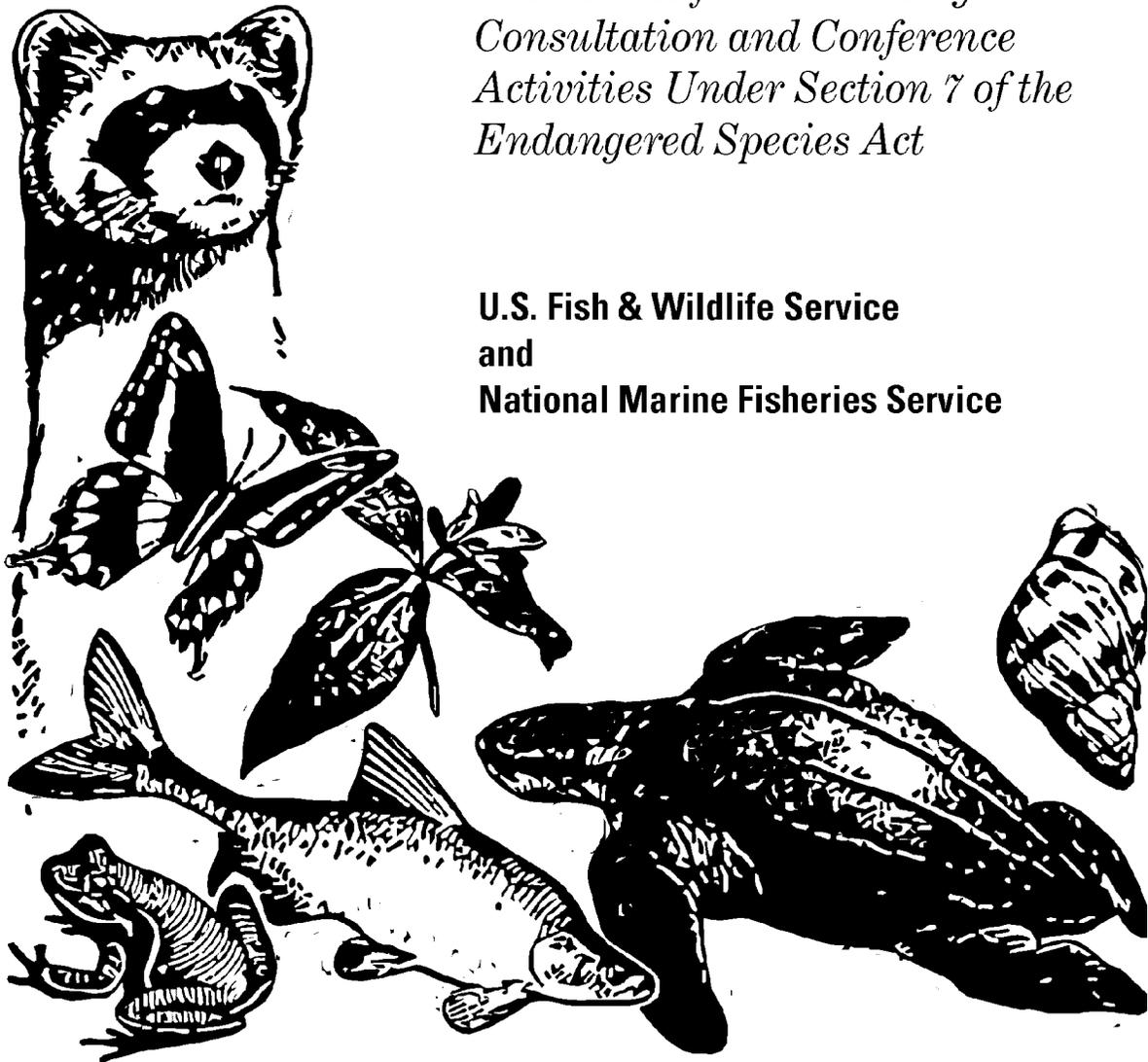
Endangered Species



Consultation Handbook

*Procedures for Conducting
Consultation and Conference
Activities Under Section 7 of the
Endangered Species Act*

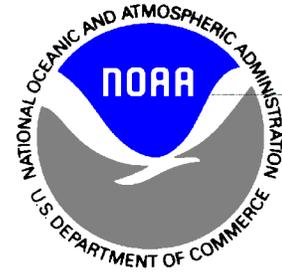
**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
and
National Marine Fisheries Service**



**March 1998
Final**



FOREWORD



It gives us great pleasure to introduce the final Section 7 Handbook. It is the culmination of much hard work by dedicated U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service employees. The Handbook provides internal guidance and establishes national policy for conducting consultation and conferences pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The purpose of the Handbook is to promote efficiency and nationwide consistency within and between the Services. The Handbook addresses the major consultation processes, including informal, formal, emergency, and special consultations, and conferences.

Through the section 7 consultation program, the Services strive to meet the consultation needs of all Federal Agencies. The Services work with their Federal partners to emphasize the identification and informal resolution of potential species conflicts in the early stages of project planning. They also provide information about listed, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitats to Federal agencies planning projects, and those applying for Federal permits and licenses. The Services work with Federal agencies on any action that is federally funded, authorized, or carried out that may affect a listed species and designated critical habitats. The Services advise the Agencies and applicants on how to avoid adversely impacting these species and habitats, and, where appropriate, the Services provide incidental take statements that allow take of threatened or endangered species that is incidental to an otherwise legal activity.

The Handbook will ensure consistent implementation of consultation procedures and development of associated documents by those biologists responsible for carrying out section 7 activities and provide the Services guidance necessary to assist other Federal agencies in meeting their responsibilities under section 7 of the Act. Although primarily targeted toward employees of the Services, other groups participating in the consultation process, including other Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, private individuals, consultants, and industry groups should find the Handbook helpful in explaining section 7 processes and providing examples of various types of consultations.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks for the hard work and dedication of all those who have made the development of this Handbook possible. We especially want to thank those entities that have become conservation partners with our Agencies through this process. This document will be an important tool in threatened and endangered species conservation for our Nation.

Jamie Rappaport Clark
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service



Endangered Species Program

Section 7 Consultation Handbook

This is a joint U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service handbook.

Page numbers in this electronic version may not match the printed version due to the size of the file and formatting requirements.

The following appendices are not available electronically:

- Appendix A — regulations and policies relating to consultation
- Appendix C — sample biological opinions
- Appendix D — Fish and Wildlife Service Solicitor's opinions

(Please note: To view PDF documents, you may need to download and install the Adobe Acrobat Reader, free from [Adobe, Inc.](#))

- [Cover Page, Foreword, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Glossary](#) [pdf]
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Questions on the contents of the handbook should be directed to the Fish and Wildlife Service [Regional Office](#) nearest you.

Last updated: December 10, 2009